

**The Death of Spencer Vinall in Newick,
Sussex – November 1865**

The following details are from the November 1865 local newspapers *East Sussex News* 24th November, *Sussex Weekly Advertiser* 25th November and *Brighton Guardian* 29th November:

"MELANCHOLY DEATH FROM A GUN ACCIDENT

On Wednesday, L G Fullagar Esq, coroner, held an inquest on the body of Spencer Vinall, at the Bull Inn, Newick. Deceased died under the circumstances detailed in the following evidence: John Vinall, shoemaker, at Newick, and father of the deceased, deposed that he was 26 years of age. On Tuesday, about half past two, he came into the shop and said that there was a blackbird up at the summer-house. He took the gun and went out. About ten minutes afterwards witness heard the report of a gun in the garden and afterwards went up to see the pig, which was not very well. When he returned from the pig pound he saw something on the ground: he went up to it and found it was the deceased. His face and head were shattered and he was quite dead. He was lying partly on his side and partly on his face. The gun, a double-barrel one, was lying at his feet. He was going to be married on Saturday and intended to have bought the furniture that day (Wednesday). Witness approved of his marriage and nothing occurred to put him out in any way. Deceased was fond of shooting and much accustomed to the use of a gun – Mr Gravelly, surgeon, deposed to seeing the body of deceased at his father's. He was lying on his side in a large pool of blood. On examining the head he found the right eye was quite gone and a large cavity opening into the skull through which the brain was protruding. The charge appeared to have taken a course almost at right angles to the face. A ramrod was lying about a yard from the deceased. There was a pellet in the screw of the ramrod. Deceased was a very sober, industrious and cheerful young man. The jury found a verdict that 'Deceased accidentally shot himself'."

The 1861 national population census shows Spencer Vinall as a journeyman shoemaker living with his father John Vinall, his mother Sarah, his brother Albert and his sisters Agnes and Clara. Spencer was to marry Emily Ellis according to the 'banns' register read on 5th, 12th and 19th November 1865. The Parish register shows that Spencer was buried on 26th November 1865.

What a sad tale.